LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
MARCH 28, 1987

9:15 a.m. Session
JMB Notes

Opening Remarks -

Setting the context -

or

There is a method to our madness

(THE HISTORIC PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT)-copies distributed

One of the pecularities of church work is that the bottom line is different...

Bottom line in busines - profit

Industry - production

Athletics - winning

It's not whether or not you win but how you play the game (What is exact quote? Grantland Rice)

is simply not true -

It is not quite the opposite -

i.e. - we do have some honor -

i.e. - Whe Universities pay young women to have sex with recruites as part

of the enducement package - we gal_____ into action and tell them the game can't be played for a whole year -

We'd like to win and play the game right - like Joe Paterno---- but in church - the how is as important as the what -

The product - is not just souls saved, building built, budgets accomplished, programs launched -

The how - the process - of identifying what we want to do and how to go about it - is a major part of the bottom line for the Church. (If you don't know that, a church meeting can make you crazy - and a General Assembly - an example of absolute wast and insanity -) till you realize that what they are doing is <u>being church</u> - and that that is what we are call to do <u>BE CHURCH</u>.

Intrigued to read about Constitution connection - Philadelphia - 1787 - parcess was important -

early device was to make th_____ into a committee of the whole - Washington was presiding officer - at each Session - he opened, then turned gavel over to chairman of committee -

debates - resolution - of committee men then resubmitted to some men sitting as convention.

It worked!

There is a theology built into the system -

see Radical Principles

to be understood against the backdrop of history - which for a thousand years had said -

Authority comes from God and is given to chosen people to exercise on god's behalf over the rest of the people.

Monarchy is the name for it - and Divine Right of Kings was the theological rationale -

Clearly - the authority of the King was dispensed by God.

Ecclesiastically - the name is Episcapacy - which became, in history, Papacy -

If you are invested in that system, to suggest that authority is lodged elsewhere is revolutionary - and teasonous -

Politically it has meant persecution - death

Ecclesiastically - not many decades ago the official Roman Catholic position was that democracy is morally evil -

Our system is based on assumption that God gives authority to the people -

- not to individuals -

We are suspect of too much power in one person, or _____

Calvin - a bit of an aristocrat - let loose in history the radical notion that in religion and politics people have authority - right - to have a say in their governance -

that they should chose their authorities (he was no pure democrate) and that leaders are accountable - not to the boss, King, Pope - but to the folk -

All of which means that the individual is terribly important.

And that when elected representation get together - the processes by which they make decisions is very important.

Thus - this day -

A short course in the Mission of the Boards -

Session - to set the sails and point the direction

_____, worship, education, fellowship, and mission

to answer to people and Presbytery for the life of church

(Pastor is moderator - leader, too - not just presider) -

bigger the church, the more leadership is important.

So - I will participate as well as moderate

but within the system

Deacons - to care for the needs of members and to express church's concern for the world

-there are decisions to be made - but it get sticky when Deacons - act like Session.

Trustees - to keep ship afloat: to know what the directions are - and who get to set the directions and then to see that ship is equipped to move ahead.

Our mission is to be the church -

our faith is that God's spirit is always a resource and always nearby - and that the Spirit is given - through the gifts of the individuals involved.

Allof which is to say this is a very important event and thank you for coming.

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JMB Notes, 2:00 p.m. Session

There are two ordination/installation vows which I particularly like:

-Do yo promise to further the peace, unity and purity of the church?

-Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love?

I like them because they contain the aesthetic of Presybterianism and the vitality of this particular church, past and present and future, God willing.

Ponder those strong words - peace, unity and purity

energy, intelligence, imagination, love -

Reflect on the fact that there is an internal dynamic, a dialogue between them...

that if you serve with energy, it may be hard on the peace...

...that if you are too heavy into the unity - it may not be conducive to imagination -

...that if your are obsessed with the purity of the church you may not risk intelligence and love -

What is going on here is a way of being the church that makes a virtue out of diversity -

-that begins with the unity Jesus Christ gives his church and then encourages and celebrates individuality - which means the eccentricities, strengths, weaknesses, peculiarities which make up the personhood of each one of us.

And the gifts... We believe that what we bring to our vocation as

leaders of the church are gifts the spirit has given us.

Ponder them ... identify them - in others - in yourself.

His gift is analysis

Her gift is good procedure

His is passion for justice

Hers is balance sheets

His is grace to laugh - human

His is a _____ of God's love for the poor -

and at the end of this time together - let us marvel at what we have and what we have been given.

What's ahead?

the adventure of continuing to discover what it means to be the church here -

and the arduous process of deliberating, discussing, arguing, and deciding

-because - in that process - we become the Church -

There are some goals (move)

-<u>to reach out in love</u>

to our neighbors

Urban people - near north - and our new neighbors who will continue to surround us - we have enormous task to be church for that many (we're only church I know that fills up every time _____)

to Urban Poor -

to expand - make a difference -

to world beyond our city and nation - to offer oneness of whole world

<u>To be lively</u>, energetic and creative in this unique place

To dare to speak a word for God - to the city

To build up the body -

with programs for growth

and with pastoral care for all

To ask - seriously - what can we do - what do we need to do -

A measure of discomfort with status quo is necessary - never change for change's sake - but a consistent asking of the question -

is this what we intend

and

is this what God wants us to do and to be -

God has blessed us richly -

with a tradition

with strength

and with this wonderful abundance of skilled, dedicated leaders -

you make the future very exciting.

Unison Prayer